

January 2009



The Bay Leaf

California Native Plant Society • East Bay Chapter • Alameda & Contra Costa Counties
www.ebcnps.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Native Here

Open for business & volunteer help: Fridays 9 am–12 pm, Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm, and **now Tuesdays 12 pm–3pm**

Conservation Conference

The CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference and workshops will be held January 17 through 21 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento. The main goal of this conference is to identify and promote science- and policy-based strategies and solutions to improve the conservation of California's native flora and natural landscapes. The conference will focus on: 1) finding and promoting solutions

to the environmental challenges confronting California's flora 2) integrating the best science with the most effective public policies to meet these challenges 3) pressing forward more and better regional and statewide landscape-level conservation initiatives.
www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2009/

Field trip p. 6

Sunday, January 4, 2009, 2:00 pm. Field trip to Huddart County Park, 1100 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside (San Mateo County)

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

From Yard to Garden: The Domestication of America's Home Grounds

Speaker: **Chris Grampp**

Wednesday, January 28, 7:30 pm

Location: Garden Room, Orinda Public Library (directions below)

While native gardeners might focus on their gardens' habitat value and vegetable gardeners see their spaces as production-oriented, most of us would define the purpose of our gardens in aesthetic terms. They exist to offer beauty—at the very least to cover bare dirt with something green.

But American gardens have a history of deeper functionality that continues to this day. In an engaging presentation illustrated with historical as well as contemporary photographs, landscape architect Chris Grampp will trace the history of the middle-class household yard over the past 150 years. His presentation will follow the American home garden through its three evolutionary stages: first as an agricultural space related to the livelihood of the family, then as an urban utility yard addressing household needs prior to the advent of municipal services, and finally as an outdoor family room.

Chris Grampp is a licensed landscape architect with experience in residential, public, and commercial projects who has taught landscape design at Merritt College for the past 22 years. He is the author of *From Yard to Garden: The Domestication of America's Home Grounds* as well as a number of articles on the social meanings of domestic gardens.

Room of the Orinda Public Library at 24 Orinda Way (in Orinda Village). The Garden Room is on the second floor of the building, accessible by stairs or an elevator. The Garden Room opens at 7:00 pm; the meeting begins at 7:30 pm. Please contact Sue Rosenthal, 510-496-6016 or rosacalifornica@earthlink.net, if you have any questions.

Directions to Orinda Public Library at 24 Orinda Way

From the west, take Hwy 24 to the Orinda/Moraga exit. At the end of the off ramp, turn left on Camino Pablo (toward Orinda Village), right on Santa Maria Way (the signal after the BART station and freeway entrance), and left on Orinda Way.

From the east, take Hwy 24 to the Orinda exit. Follow the ramp to Orinda Village. Turn right on Santa Maria way (the first signal) and left on Orinda Way.

Once on Orinda Way, go 1 short block to the parking lot on the southeast side of the two-story building on your right. There is additional free parking beneath the building as well as on the street.

From BART (4 blocks): Exit the Orinda station, turn right and cross a pedestrian bridge, then cross a second pedestrian bridge on the left. Go 1 short block on the sidewalk to the third pedestrian bridge. Go 2 blocks on Orinda Way to the Orinda Library.

Upcoming Programs

Wednesday, February 25, 7:30 pm (Orinda Library Garden Room)
TBA

Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 p.m. (Orinda Library Garden Room)
Ralph and Lisa Shanks—Indian Baskets of Central California: Art, Culture, and History

East Bay CNPS membership meetings are free of charge and open to everyone. This month's meeting takes place in the Garden

LETTER TO CHAPTER MEMBERS

Dear Member,

Your CNPS chapter needs volunteers, as Charli Danielsen noted in the December 2008 *Bay Leaf*, page 1.

Environmental work involves a broad spectrum of skills, and requires varying amounts of volunteer time, to address the issues which provide opportunities for CNPS to have a beneficial impact.

Below, I identify some of the skills that CNPS can put to excellent use on behalf of native habitat conservation.

If you have any one or more of these skills, the chapter can find a suitable volunteer niche for you. Just email to volunteer@ebcups.org or leave a message at 510-549-0211, with your name and how best to reach you.

Clerical skills such as note-taking and transcription. There is always something going on that needs to be recorded in order to share valued information more widely. If you have an ability to capture this value on paper (or its electronic equivalent), CNPS can use your time well.

Physical stamina. There are varied opportunities to put your love of physical activity to work in the field. Invasive plant species are a major detriment to conservation of native habitats, and require ongoing monitoring to discover new colonizations, to track the results of past "weeding" efforts, and/or to participate in removal of invasive plants from our preserved habitats.

Artistic Flair. Beauty is in the eye of every CNPS member, but the ability to render the beauty of our native habitats and plants on paper (or T-shirts, or bumper stickers, or sew-on patches, or . . .) is the realm of a few gifted souls. Help us attract more members and resources through art (and its sale).

Photographic skills. Photo documentation of habitat conditions, for ongoing management and monitoring objectives, provides a visual record of habitat changes through time.

Prolific reading capacity. Environmental documents needing public review and comment (e.g., from CNPS) are both abundant and voluminous. People who can tackle such documents handily will find a ready outlet for their reading skills.

But there are spirits of a yet more liberal culture, to whom no simplicity is barren. There are not only stately pines, but fragile flowers, like the orchises, commonly described as too delicate for cultivation, which derive their nutriment from the crudest mass of peat. These remind us, that, not only for strength, but for beauty, the poet must, from time to time, travel the logger's path and the Indian's trail, to drink at some new and more bracing fountain of the Muses, far in the recesses of the wilderness.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), U.S. philosopher, author, naturalist. "Chesuncook" (1858) in *The Maine Woods* (1864), in *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 3, pp. 172-173, Houghton Mifflin (1906).

Public Speaking Experience. Public agencies involved in formulating environmental policy and management planning are generally required to hold public hearings to receive comments about their plans. CNPS is often involved in such public commentary, but requires more volunteers.

Measurement and observational skills. Data is the cornerstone of CNPS's ability to assess environmental conditions, and to evaluate proposed land management plans. A lack of data is the usual shortcoming that can be significantly improved through volunteer contributions. The devil is in the details.

Technical or scientific knowledge. Environmental issues generally involve a broad range of matters that require perceptive technical review and public comment. If you have any such skill(s), ask us how they may be applied to CNPS's conservation efforts.

Any policy, political, or legal skills. Environmental issues also are impacted by public policy, politics and legal constraints and perceptions. If you are a "people person" who likes to participate in these particular areas of activity, then CNPS has volunteer opportunities for you.

Green thumb. Our CNPS chapter raises funds through its plant sales – the plants are raised by our volunteers. If you already have a green thumb, or want to tint your thumb a vivid green, let us know.

Writing Skills. Useful for drafting documents, comments on development proposals, letters to the editor of your local newspaper, newsletter articles, etc.

Fund Raising. If you have fund-raising experience, or a background in development, then your volunteer efforts will be well spent in CNPS.

Peter Rauch

NATIVE HERE NURSERY

Native Here has new expanded hours through February. We'll stay open an extra hour on Saturdays, until 2 pm, and we'll also be open on Tuesdays from 12 pm–3 pm. The extra weekday hours allow agencies, parks staff, and landscape professionals, as well as home gardeners, more opportunities to buy plants during the prime planting season. The Tuesdays hours will also allow us to better accommodate requests for contract-grown plants.

We're offering a special on certain trees. If you have a large yard or are planting for a restoration project, we have a lot of trees in 5-gallons containers. Buy one 5-gallon *Cupressus sargentii*, or *Aesculus californica* and get the second one for \$1. We offer the same "dollar sale" on 1-gallon *Quercus agrifolia* and *Quercus lobata* through January.

Volunteer opportunities and ways to help the Nursery

- Come buy plants throughout the winter. Plants emerging from dormancy, such as soap root, Ithuriel's spear, and larkspur, will become available this month and later.
- Gregg is leading trips to collect seeds and cuttings on various days. He lists the date, time and meeting place at www.ebcnps.org/seedtrips.html or you may call him at 510-223-3310 for more information or e-mail Charli at nativehere@ebcnps.org
- Volunteers are welcome at the nursery to help replenish our stock. We'll be seed sowing, transplanting, weeding, moving plants



Cupressus sargentii

Photo by Janice Bray



Aesculus californica

Photo by Janice Bray

Cupressus sargentii
Sargent cypress
Cupressaceae

- Fast growing evergreen tree reaches heights of 70 feet
- Needs good drainage and full sun
- Will grow in poor soils, serpentine, and in chaparral areas
- Drought tolerant once established
- Bark is dark gray to dark brown
- Cones are woody, 1 inch in diameter

Aesculus californica
Buckeye
Hippocastanaceae

- Riparian tree about 10 to 15 feet tall but may be shrub-like in dry settings
- Loses its leaves in late summer
- Attractive in winter with white bark and dangling round fruits
- Leaves out early in spring and produces many large creamy white to pink flower spikes

CONSERVATION

Big Box Mentality Along the East Bay Shore

What do a baseball stadium, gambling casino, and power plant all have in common? As it turns out, a great deal, at least from the point of view of the East Bay Chapter's conservation program. The A's stadium in Fremont, the Russell City Energy Center (RCEC) in Hayward, and the Point Molate casino in Richmond are all poised to move in along the east shore of the San Francisco Bay near remnants of some of the most sensitive native plant habitat. As projects, they're all part of the "newer, bigger, better" syndrome, promising to bring wealth, employment, and salvation to these bayshore cities bruised by the economy. At least that's the pitch both to the local city councils and to just plain folks like the rest of us. Sound too good to be true?

Members of the Conservation Committee have attended public meetings where the promised benefits of these projects have been trumpeted. We're there because these projects, if built, will have major impacts upon some of the most precious remaining native plant habitat along our shore. The proposed site for the A's stadium and ballpark village is immediately adjacent to the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge, home to special status plant and animal species such as Contra Costa goldfields, California tiger salamander, and tadpole and fairy shrimp—it also hosts important shorebird and waterfowl habitat. We think it makes no sense to locate a mega-stadium and housing project (3100 units) where the impacts from air, water, traffic, noise and lighting pollution, the onslaught of illegal off-roading, and the detritus of human occupation will degrade this sensitive habitat. After all, there's a reason we call the Don Edwards a *refuge*.

We came late to the controversy surrounding Calpine's Russell City Energy Center in Hayward—in part because public noticing for the hearings has been notoriously poor—so poor that the EPA Appeals Board has required the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to re-open hearings on one of its air permits because the District violated its noticing regulations. A local grassroots group called us wondering whether we were aware that a huge 600-megawatt power plant was proposed within 1500 feet of Cogswell Marsh on the Hayward Regional Shoreline where 15 listed species make their home. The plant will produce over 600 tons of various air emissions, or more than a ton for every megawatt of power. Born out of the Enron scare, the project is a textbook case of manipulation of the environmental review process by the lead agency, the California Energy Commission, which ignored recommendations from its own staff not to approve RCEC. In some of the most amazing corporate twists and turns, Calpine, the project applicant, shook off nearly every promised mitigation and backed out of its commitment of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the City of Hayward and the East Bay Regional Park District. Incredibly, the US Fish and Wild-

life Service concluded that this project would have no significant impacts on the adjacent salt marsh and waived a formal Biological Opinion. The project is one permit away from full acceptance. Now, with its foot in the door, Calpine has applied to the California Public Utilities Commission to renegotiate its purchase of power agreement with PG&E so that it can charge even more for the electricity it will generate.

For many years, the East Bay Chapter has led field trips to explore the remnant coastal prairie at Point Molate. There, small portions of grassland and coastal bluff communities have held on in areas where the US Navy left them to benign neglect. As East Bay Chapter members know, for some time there have been plans to build a giant casino, hotel, and housing complex at Point Molate, guaranteed—according to the developer who presented his plans at a meeting last month—to bring in a steady stream of high rollers eager to leave their money at the gambling tables—money that would revitalize the City of Richmond. Many of the members of the public present at that meeting countered that what the casino would bring would be blight, crime, snarled traffic, and a degraded environment. We agree—the public's interest would be best served instead by protecting the point as open space. The Environmental Impact Statement on the project is to be released within the next few weeks.

What unites these three huge projects is the notion that somehow they will bring prosperity to their host cities and to the region, when common sense says otherwise. How cynical the claim that their impacts can be reduced to less than significant when they lie immediately adjacent to fragile wetlands. And how short-sighted. Just this week the San Francisco Bay Joint Ventures Partners issued a white paper on the impacts of climate change on the Bay. Among its findings was the recommendation that shoreline cities hurry to protect from further development the thin band of remaining habitat between the Bay wetlands and the encroaching industrial belt. As the Bay's waters rise in response to global warming, there must be some place for wetlands to rise as well. Otherwise, mud flats, salt marsh, tidal ponds and sloughs and the teeming wildlife that depends upon them will be lost. Seen in this light, the problem that lies before us clearly is not how to accommodate a new ballpark, a casino, or a mega-power plant but where to find space enough for the very web of shore life to hang on. The notion of a boom economy has lost its cachet, replaced by a new reality. We need strong medicine. Given the nature and magnitude of global changes we are beginning to experience, the ratio of benefits to costs of these big box projects is puny.

Laura Baker

The boatmen appeared to lead an easy and contented life, and we thought that we should prefer their employment ourselves to many professions which are much more sought after. They suggested how few circumstances are necessary to the well-being and serenity of man, how indifferent all employments are, and that any may seem noble and poetic to the eyes of men, if pursued with sufficient buoyancy and freedom.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), U.S. philosopher, author, naturalist. *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), in *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 1, p. 220, Houghton Mifflin (1906).

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

It's a new year and your membership chairs are looking for some new ways to enhance our membership column. One idea that came to mind is to feature a member a month. If you would like to be featured in this column, please send me a writeup of yourself, and your CNPS experiences. A photo would help to capture your moment. We are open to all suggestions.

Electronic notification of up and coming events and available volunteer opportunities is in the works. To be kept informed and on the cutting edge of restoring our native plant species and plant communities make sure we have your current email address.

Have any questions about upcoming events? Interested in getting more involved? Please don't hesitate to contact us. elainejx@att.net, 925-372-0687 or carollbcastro@hotmail.com, 510-352-2382

Getting More Involved and Having Lots of Fun Doing It Think Globally, Volunteer Locally

Brentwood—The Friends of Marsh Creek will be planting a California Native Demonstration Garden in Creekside Park. Contact Mary Grim 925-672-6522 x 113 or email mary.grim@ca.nacdnet.net

Martinez—Help needed at the new Native Plant Garden at the John Muir Historical Site Visitors Center. Join us on most Monday or Tuesday mornings for an hour or so of general clean up at our beautiful new garden. We have finalized the *Color & Garden Book* and it will be available at the John Muir Visitors Center for a \$5.00 donation. Contact Elaine Jackson at 925-372-0687 or email elainejx@att.net

Martinez—Strentzel Meadow is in the process of planning a native butterfly garden and possible seeding of additional native grasses. If you would like to help, let me know. elainejx@att.net

Mt Diablo State Park—Looking for volunteers to help restore Mitchell Canyon's upper Mitchell Creek. It is mostly weeding

blackberry and periwinkle, some planting in the wet season and irrigation when dry. Work is physically demanding, ongoing every Wednesday 8 am-2 pm and the 3rd Saturday of each month 9 am-3 pm. Contact Dave Caniglia at cani@mindspring.com or 925-287-9733.

Pleasant Hill—Volunteers are always welcome at the Pleasant Hill Adult Education Center Garden. Contact Monika Olsen at 925-937-1530 or email phecgarden@prodigy.net

Walnut Creek—Native demonstration garden on The Iron Horse Trail in Walnut Creek near the Walnut Creek Intermediate. Contact Judy Adler, jadlermtnmama@sbcglobal.net

Many other communities have local watershed organizations that provide excellent means to get involved with education, restoration and, of course, meeting people from your town or city who share your interests in native plants and their significance for the Bay Area's highly diverse micro ecologies.

(Do you have or know of a local event coming up in your neighborhood that would be a good location for CNPS to have a display table? **You can host it.** Come on up to our Native Here Nursery (during business hours) and pick up supplies to pass out. Call us with any questions.

New Members

Please join us in welcoming those who joined in the October/November time frame: Christine Alford, Britt Ascher, Shelly Benson, Alastair Bolton, Adrienne Boyars, Alice Brock-Utne, Hillary Cooper, Kevin Davey, Beth Ferree, Mike Gridley, Miao He, Megan Keever, Belinda Lo, Paul Muniz, Betty Nelson, Mary Shea, Cecile Shohet, Mardi Sicular-Mertens, Steve Toby, and Charlotte Toothman. Please let me know if your name is missing from the list.

Many thanks to all of you that have renewed your membership throughout the year. May you enjoy many more years with EB-CNPS.

Elaine Jackson & Carol Castro

If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, and the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar.... I trust that we shall be more imaginative, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher, and more ethereal, as our sky, —our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains, —our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests, —and our hearts shall ever correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas. Perchance there will appear to the traveler something ... of joyous and serene, in our very faces. Else to what end does the world go on, and why was America discovered?

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), U.S. philosopher, author, naturalist. "Walking" (1862), in *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 5, pp. 222-223, Houghton Mifflin (1906).

FIELD TRIP

Sunday, January 4, 2009, 2:00 pm. Field trip to Huddart County Park, 1100 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside (San Mateo County). Meet in the parking lot just past the pay station.

Leader: David Margolies, 510-654-0283, 510-393-1858 (cell), divaricatum@gmail.net

The walk: We will hike on the Crystal Springs Trail, where *Scoliopus bigelovii* (fetid adder's tongue, Liliaceae) blooms in early January. (In most locations outside botanical gardens, it blooms in late January or early February.) This is a gentle trail, losing about 200 feet over about 1/2 mile to the creek. We will walk to the creek and then return the same way. It is unlikely that there will be any other flowers out this early, but the fetid adder's tongue's presence tells us that the new flower season has started. Other plants out of flower will also be identified. The area is second growth redwood and mixed evergreen forest.

ACTIVITIES OF OTHERS

Plant Medicine Circles

Towering over the East Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Mt. Diablo is one of the Bay Area's highest peaks, a sacred mountain for the region's native peoples, and teeming with biological diversity.

Indigenous and shamanic traditions view plants as intelligent beings and sources of not only physical medicine and food but also wisdom, perspective, and companionship. In the vessel of nurturing ceremony, we will walk the land sharing stories, songs, and direct visioning with the plants of Mount Diablo. Consider joining us in to celebrate and learn from our often overlooked green-blooded relatives.

Directions: Go to Woodside (if in the East Bay, cross the Bay Bridge and get on I-280 south; otherwise get on 280 south). Take the 84 West/Woodside Road exit. Go west through the town of Woodside. Soon after the main part of the town, take a right onto Kings Mountain Road. The park entrance is on the right after a few miles. Go past the pay station into the main parking lot. We will meet there. Note that you must pay the parking fee even if the station is not staffed (use the envelopes provided).

Note: There is poison oak in the park. Poison oak is dangerous even when it has no leaves. Stay on the trail. It will probably be muddy and may be raining. Be prepared. The walk will take place rain or shine.

David Margolies

Monthly plant medicine circles are from 12 noon-3 pm on the Saturdays, January 10, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 5 and June 6. Gatherings are open to all by donation (\$25 suggested). Circles will be held in light rain, cold, and wind and rescheduled for heavy rain or lightning. Locations on the mountain will vary throughout the season. Be in contact for details.

Contact: Daniel Foor, 650-248-8917, danielfoor@yahoo.com, www.ancestralmedicine.org



Garrya elliptica (coast silk tassel), Piedmont Photo by Joe Willingham



THE WAYNE RODERICK LECTURES

WINTER 2008-2009

at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden

Wildcat Canyon Road and South Park Drive (South Park Drive is closed Nov.-March)
in Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley, CA
(510) 841-8732 E-mail Address: bgarden@ebparks.org www.nativeplants.org

Saturday mornings 10:30

Free

Notice: Seating is limited. To be sure of a seat come early and save a chair.

2009

JANUARY

- 3 Fremont Peak, Pinnacles, and the road to Neenach—Steve Edwards
- 10 Exploring the lava caps of the western Sierra Nevada—Larry Abers
- 17 Saving Mt. Diablo—Seth Adams
- 24 Seeing and saving all the endangered species of the GGNRA—Brent Plater
- 31 Smog is slow-release nitrogen fertilizer: implications for conservation of California's biodiversity—Stuart Weiss

FEBRUARY

- 7 Exotic microbes, a real threat to California ecosystems—Matteo Garbelotto
- 14 Studies in the Yuba Pass and other parts of the Sierra Nevada—Bob Case
- 21 California geology from the ground up, part one—principles and travels from Pt. Reyes south to the deserts—Steve Edwards
- 28 California geology from the ground up, part two—from the Delta to Oregon—Steve Edwards

Don't forget: free tours of the botanic garden every Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 (when it's not raining, when the garden is open, and, when we're not conducting our annual plant sale on the third Saturday in April)

Board of Directors

Elected Officers	Education/Outreach	Grants	Publicity/Media	Janice Bray Liaison to Board
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Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

I wish to affiliate with:

East Bay Chapter (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties)

Other _____

E-mail _____

(optional)

Membership category:

Student, Limited income, \$25

Individual, Library, \$45

Household, Family, or Group, \$75

Supporting, \$75

Plant lover, \$100

Patron, \$300

Benefactor, \$600

Mariposa Lily, \$1500

Mail application and check to: California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento CA 95816

**California Native Plant Society
East Bay Chapter
P.O. Box 5597, Elmwood Station
Berkeley CA 94705**

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